



June 6, 2006

## **MEMORANDUM**

To: Directors of Financial Aid, Directors of Admissions, and Deans of Enrollment  
LIFE Scholarship Eligible Institutions

From: Dr. Karen Woodfaulk, Director of Student Services Division

Subject: Transfer Students from Non-eligible Institutions and the LIFE Scholarship

### **Purpose**

To advise institutions of the requirements for determining eligibility for transfer students from non-eligible institutions for the LIFE Scholarship.

### **1. Eligible Institutions:**

According to the regulation for the LIFE Scholarship, “the LIFE GPA includes all credit hours and grades earned at all eligible institutions (in-state or out-of-state). The Commission on Higher Education defines an “eligible institution” as an accredited institution recognized by the U.S. Department of Education. For the 2005-06 academic year only, institutions were permitted to define an eligible institution as a “regionally” accredited public or independent institution (in-state, out-of-state, or an institution from which transfer credit is accepted) or an accredited institution recognized by the U.S. Department of Education (in-state or out-of-state). However, beginning with the 2006-07 academic year, a school must be an accredited institution recognized by the U.S. Department of Education to be considered as an “eligible institution” for the purposes of the LIFE GPA. If an institution is non-accredited or if an institution is accredited by an institutional accrediting agency that is not recognized by the U.S. Department of Education, then the institution is a **non-eligible institution** for the purposes of scholarship eligibility.

### **2. Transfer Students from Non-eligible Institutions:**

For determining eligibility for a student transferring from a non-eligible public or independent institution (i.e., a school that is not an accredited institution recognized by the U.S. Department of Education) for the LIFE Scholarship, institutions should consider the following requirements:

1. Whether the student meets all eligibility requirements as established by law and regulation at the time of high school graduation and enrollment at the eligible institution;
2. Whether the student was enrolled for more than two terms (or its equivalent) at a non-eligible institution; and

3. Did an eligible institution (in-state or out-of-state) accept grades and/or credit hours as transfer credits from a non-eligible institution.

**A. The LIFE GPA and Annual Credit Hour Requirement:**

According to the regulation for the LIFE Scholarship, “the LIFE GPA must include all grades earned at any eligible institution, including courses that do not transfer based on the institution’s policy and college courses taken while in high school.” This means that all grades and credit hours that a student has earned at all eligible institutions must be included in the calculation of the LIFE GPA:

- If an eligible institution (in-state or out-of-state) accepts grades and credit hours from a non-eligible institution, then the grades and credit hours that transferred to an eligible institution **must be included** in the calculation of the LIFE GPA and annual credit hour requirement for LIFE Scholarship eligibility.
- If an eligible institution (in-state or out-of-state) only accepts credit hours and does not accept any grades from a non-eligible institution, then the credit hours that transferred (including the grades that did not transfer) to an eligible institution **cannot** be included in the calculation of the LIFE GPA. Instead, the credit hours that transferred to the eligible institution **must be included** in the annual credit hour requirement for LIFE Scholarship eligibility.

**B. Student Eligibility:**

To be eligible for a LIFE Scholarship, a student transferring from a non-eligible institution must meet the following requirements:

- Students who have been enrolled for more than two terms in a non-eligible institution and transfer to an eligible institution (in-state or out-of-state) **must** earn a minimum 3.0 LIFE GPA and 30 credit hours by the end of the academic year at an eligible institution to be awarded the LIFE Scholarship the next academic year.
- Students who have been enrolled for no more than two terms (or its equivalent) and transfer from a non-eligible institution mid-year must complete fifteen credit hours and earn a minimum 3.0 LIFE GPA by the end of the academic year at an eligible institution to be awarded the LIFE Scholarship the next academic year.

**C. Terms of Eligibility:**

The maximum number of terms of eligibility is based on the student’s initial college enrollment with the exception of the summer term immediately prior to the student’s initial college enrollment and up to one academic year of full-time enrollment in remedial or developmental coursework. Students may receive a LIFE Scholarship for a maximum of two terms for a one-year educational program, four terms for an associate’s degree program or at least a two-year program that is acceptable for full credit towards a bachelor’s degree, eight terms (or its equivalent) towards the first bachelor’s degree or program of study that is structured so as not to require a bachelor’s degree for acceptance into the program and leads to a graduate degree program or ten consecutive terms towards an approved five-year bachelor’s degree program (see, LIFE Scholarship Regulation Section 62-900.20 labeled Terms of Eligibility).

Institutions must comply with the following requirements for a student who transfers from a non-eligible institution:

- If an eligible institution (in-state or out-of-state) accepts grades and/or credit hours from a non-eligible institution, then the student's terms of eligibility for the LIFE Scholarship **must** begin with the date of initial enrollment at the non-eligible institution. In addition, the student must earn a minimum 3.0 LIFE GPA and 30 credit hours by the end of each academic year at an eligible institution to be awarded the LIFE Scholarship the next academic year.
- If an eligible institution does not accept grades and/or credit hours from a non-eligible institution, then the student's terms of eligibility for the LIFE Scholarship **must** begin with the date of enrollment at the first attended eligible institution (in-state or out-of-state). This means that if the student transferring from a non-eligible institution enrolls at an eligible institution in-state or out-of-state prior to transferring to the current institution, then the student's terms of eligibility **must** begin with the date of enrollment at the first attended eligible institution.
- If all of the following requirements are met, then the student may be awarded the LIFE Scholarship upon enrollment at an eligible institution in this State: 1) the eligible institution does not accept grades and/or credit hours from a non-eligible institution; 2) the student was enrolled in the non-eligible institution for no more than two terms; 3) the student has never enrolled in an eligible institution in-state or out-of-state during a fall or spring term (or its equivalent); and 4) the student meets all eligibility requirements as established by law and regulation at the time of high school graduation and enrollment at the eligible institution. The terms of eligibility for a student who meets all four criteria as listed above **must** begin with the date of enrollment at the eligible institution. If the student does not meet all four criteria as listed above, then the student must earn a minimum 3.0 LIFE GPA and 30 credit hours by the end of the academic year at an eligible institution to be awarded the LIFE Scholarship the next academic year.
- If the student enrolls in an eligible institution (in-state or out-of-state) at any point in time during a fall or spring term (or its equivalent), then the terms of eligibility for the student **must** begin with the date of enrollment at the first eligible institution.

### **Questions**

If you have any questions, concerns or need clarification regarding this directive, please contact Dr. Tajuana Massie, LIFE Scholarship Manager, at (803) 737-2271 or Dr. Karen Woodfaulk, Director of Student Services, at (803) 737-2244.

**Summary Table 1:**

<b>IF:</b>	<b>THEN:</b>
<b>The LIFE GPA and Annual Credit Hour Requirement</b>	
An eligible institution (in-state or out-of-state) transfers grades and credit hours from a non-eligible institution,	the grades and credit hours that transferred <b><u>must be included</u></b> in the calculation of the LIFE GPA and annual credit hour requirement.
An eligible institution (in-state or out-of-state) only accepts credit hours and does not accept any grades from a non-eligible institution,	the credit hours that transferred <b><u>must be included</u></b> in the annual credit hour requirement for LIFE Scholarship eligibility. However, the credit hours or the grades that did not transfer <b><u>cannot be included</u></b> in the calculation of the LIFE GPA.
<b>Student Eligibility</b>	
The student has been enrolled for more than two terms in a non-eligible institution,	the student <b><u>must</u></b> earn a minimum 3.0 LIFE GPA and an average of 30 credit hours by the end of each academic year at an eligible institution to be awarded the LIFE Scholarship the next academic year.
The student has been enrolled in a non-eligible institution for no more than two terms (or its equivalent) and transfers mid-year,	the student <b><u>must</u></b> complete fifteen credit hours and earn a minimum 3.0 LIFE GPA by the end of the academic year at an eligible institution to be awarded the LIFE Scholarship the next academic year.

\*\*\***Important Note:** Institutions should only include grade conversions and credit hours that transfer to an eligible institution in the calculation of the LIFE GPA and annual credit hour requirement. For example, if a student earned an “A” in a course at a non-eligible institution but the grade was accepted and converted to a “C” at an eligible institution, then the grade of “C” **should be included** in the calculation of the student’s LIFE GPA. In addition, if a student earns 15 credit hours at a non-eligible institution but an eligible institution only accepts 12 credit hours as transfer credits, then only the 12 credit hours that transferred to an eligible institution **should be included** in the calculation of the LIFE GPA and total credit hours earned for LIFE Scholarship eligibility.

**Summary Table 1 (Continued):**

<b>IF:</b>	<b>THEN:</b>
<b>Terms of Eligibility</b>	
An eligible institution (in-state or out-of-state) <u>accepts</u> grades and/or credit hours from a non-eligible institution,	1. the student's terms of eligibility for the LIFE Scholarship <b><u>must</u></b> begin with the date of initial enrollment at the non-eligible institution; <u>and</u> 2. the student <b><u>must</u></b> earn a minimum 3.0 LIFE GPA and 30 credit hours by the end of each academic year at an eligible institution to be awarded the LIFE Scholarship.
An eligible institution (in-state or out-of-state) <u>does not accept</u> grades and/or credit hours from a non-eligible institution,	the student's terms of eligibility for the LIFE Scholarship <b><u>must</u></b> begin with the date of enrollment at the first attended eligible institution (in-state or out-of-state).
1. The eligible institution <u>does not accept</u> grades and/or credit hours from a non-eligible institution; 2. The student was enrolled in a non-eligible institution for no more than two terms; 3. The student has never enrolled in an eligible institution in-state or out-of-state during a fall or spring term (or its equivalent); <u>and</u> 4. The student meets the initial eligibility requirements as established by law and regulation at the time of high school graduation <u>and</u> enrollment in the eligible institution,	1. the student <b><u>can</u></b> be awarded the LIFE Scholarship upon enrollment at an eligible SC institution; <u>and</u> 2. the terms of eligibility for the student <b><u>must</u></b> begin with the date of enrollment at the eligible institution.
The student enrolls in an eligible institution (in-state or out-of-state) at any point in time during a fall or spring term (or its equivalent),	the terms of eligibility for the student <b><u>must</u></b> begin with the date of enrollment at the first attended eligible institution.